

## Evaluate Activity: 'Worth reading?'



*"the ability to judge the value of material for a given purpose"*  
(Kennedy et al., n.d., pp. 12).

### Learning objective:

Students compare and contrast the value of set readings/articles to their understanding of a specific context or topic.

### Overview:

This activity is similar to the *Pick or mix?* activity, except the focus is on analysing journal articles (you could also do this with web pages, text chapters and so forth). Each student is given responsibility for a particular journal article. They must determine the value of the article to their understanding of a particular topic or context. For example, Student 1 looks at Article A, Student 2 looks at Article B, Student 3 looks at Article C and so on. The students then join their peers to compare their articles and their evaluation of the articles. They must work together to (you will need to specify one of these options):

- Determine whether one article is of more value than the others OR are the articles of equal value OR are the articles of value in different ways?
- Rank the articles in order of relevance/usefulness/importance (e.g. from 1 being most important to three being least important).
- Choose one and only one article.
- One of the above + add an alternative article that they have found themselves.

They must justify their decision (e.g. with a short presentation/spiel).

If you would prefer students to work as individuals, set students the task of evaluating one article per week (always against the same context). Eventually, each student must determine whether some or all of the articles are of value, and they must justify their choice.

### Example:

Students are each provided with an article to read in relation to learning styles, and given the context of learning more about learning styles of students in corporate training settings. When the students group together, they must determine how the articles relate to the context, rank the articles in order of importance, and justify the ranking.

<b>FACE TO FACE VERSION</b>	
<b>Activity Description/Steps</b>	<b>Resources</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Briefly explain the purpose of the task and how students will complete the task. Include information about the context.</li> <li>You will need at least two articles for students to work with, though three or more is preferable.</li> </ul> <p><b>SCAFFOLDING TIP:</b> It may be useful to provide a <i>Rubric</i>, a checklist or a list of pertinent questions to help students determine the value of each article. Modelling the process of evaluating an article (as it applies to a particular context) will also be helpful.</p>	Slide or handout with basic instructions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You can either provide students with time to do their individual reading/thinking in class (allow around 30 minutes, depending on the length or complexity of the articles), or set the individual readings as homework for sharing in the following class. If the reading is set as homework, you can provide access to the articles via MyLO, rather than having to print them out/get students to access them via computer during class.</li> <li>Remind students that they must bring a written/printed copy of their individual work to class.</li> </ul> <p><b>SCAFFOLDING TIP:</b> After some reading time, you could pair students with the same articles together to discuss their findings. This may help some students with their interpretation of an article, before they go on to share their idea with their groups.</p>	If students do this as homework, you could get them to submit their article reference details and initial thoughts to a <i>Dropbox Folder</i> or <i>Discussion Topic</i> on MyLO by a specified deadline. This lends a sense of urgency to the task, as students know that you can see who has done the work. It also makes it easier to pick out certain examples to share in class.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Form students into groups. Be careful to mix students so that each group contains students who have reviewed different articles. They must compare their findings and work together to meet the desired requirement (see options, page 1). Remind students that they must be ready to justify their decision. Allow at least 15 minutes for group discussion, depending on the number and complexity of articles to be discussed.</li> </ul>	<p>You may wish to place the instructions back up on screen.</p> <p>It could help to provide students with butchers paper and textas, or computer screens (if you have access to the TEAL lab), to jot down their ideas.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow at least 20 minutes at the end of the activity to contrast the decisions made by different groups. Prompt the groups to justify their positions. This is a good opportunity for you to point out any gaps in understanding, and reinforce important points.</li> </ul>	<p>Have the context and articles up on screen, so you can easily refer to them during the discussion.</p> <p>A good method of getting a simple comparison is a show of hands. Then, you'll visually be able to see which groups had different opinions and to focus your discussion on those differences.</p>

## ONLINE VERSION

### PREPARATION IN MYLO

- You will need to set up two *Group Categories*: *Article Distribution*; and *Discussion Groups*. The *Article Distribution Category* will be used to distribute the articles evenly amongst the students. If you have four articles, you will need to create four groups. The *Discussion Groups Category* will allow you to facilitate discussion about the articles between students. You must ensure that at least one student from each of the *Article Distribution* groups is included in each *Discussion Group*. Unfortunately, you will have to enrol students manually, as MyLO cannot generate *Groups* based on other *Groups*.
- Create links to the relevant articles in MyLO. Create *Release Conditions* to release each document to the relevant *Idea Distribution Group*.
- Create one *Discussion Topic* for each *Discussion Group* (to save time, do this when you set up the *Discussion Groups Category*).

### Activity Description/Steps

- Briefly explain the purpose of the task and how students will complete the task. Include information about the context. Students will need to be given two deadlines.
- Give students an initial deadline by which they must read the article that they have been allocated, and post their initial thoughts about their article. Allow about 3-5 days for this.
- Provide students with a second deadline (allow about 7 – 12 days for this from commencement of the task). As a team, they must work together to meet your requirements (see options on page 1). A member of the group must represent their final decision by adding a post to their group *Discussion Topic* with a title like *Our group's final decision*.

**SCAFFOLDING TIP:** Model what a good article summary might look like/include. For example, you could include questions that students should respond to in their summary.

### Resources

You could introduce the task with a brief video or a well written piece of text, perhaps in the form of an *HTML Page*.

- The day before the initial deadline, contact students who have not yet posted their work, to remind them of the deadline.
- After the deadline has been reached, you may like to send out a *News Item*/email, perhaps highlighting some of your favourite posts (and tell students why they are your favourites) and reminding students about the next part of the task (second deadline).

At least one *Discussion Topic* will be required so students can share their work.

- Two days before the second deadline, contact students who have not yet assisted with their groups' decision (e.g. they haven't posted since the first deadline). Remind them of the impending deadline, and that they should at least post to agree or disagree with the opinions expressed so far.

- Provide a summary of the submitted work, flagging the conclusions that different groups reached. If particular group members were very active/helpful, you may wish to thank them for their contributions, or perhaps their work in organising/moderating a group.

A *News Item*, or short video embedded in a *News Item* is a useful way of doing this.